

X-Play

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X-Play (previously ***GameSpot TV*** and ***Extended Play***) was a [TV program](#) about [video games](#), known for its reviews and comedy skits. The program aired on [G4](#) in the [United States](#), [G4techTV](#) in [Canada](#), [FUEL TV](#) in [Australia](#), [Ego](#) in [Israel](#), [GXT](#) in [Italy](#), [MTV ??????](#) in [Russia](#) and [Solar Sports](#) in the [Philippines](#). On October 26, 2012, it was reported that the show (along with *[Attack of the Show](#)*) would cease production after 2012 ^[1]; the one-hour series finale aired January 23, 2013.


The show in its final incarnation was hosted by [Morgan Webb](#) and [Blair Herter](#), with [Kristin Adams](#) (nee Holt) and [Jessica Chobot](#) serving as special correspondents/co-hosts (Tiffany Smith, [Alex Sim-Wise](#) and Joel Gourdin have also served as correspondents during the show's run). [Adam Sessler](#) was the original host of the program; he previously co-hosted with [Lauren Fielder](#) and [Kate Botello](#).

X-Play began on the ZDTV network in [1998](#) as *GameSpot TV*, where Sessler co-hosted with Fielder for the show's first year, then co-hosted with Botello up through [2002](#) (it should be noted that the producers of ZDTV originally had plans to air a video-game program when the channel launched called *Extended Play* that would be hosted by [Simon Rex](#) ^[2]; however, when an agreement was reached with the makers of the newly-created *GameSpot* website, plans for the original show's format were scrapped in favor of a *GameSpot*-branded program, and Rex was dropped as host).

The show assumed the previously rejected *Extended Play* moniker in [2001](#) after ZDTV changed to [TechTV](#) and the partnership with [Ziff Davis](#)' [GameSpot](#) ended. Botello left in early 2002, and Sessler hosted the show by himself up until [April 2003](#), when Webb joined the cast and the show was renamed *X-Play*.

Contents

- [1 History](#)
 - [1.1 GameSpot TV](#)
 - [1.2 Extended Play](#)
 - [1.3 X-Play San Francisco](#)
 - [1.4 X-Play Los Angeles](#)
 - [1.5 X-Play Expands](#)
 - [1.6 X-Play XL](#)
 - [1.7 1,000th Episode](#)
 - [1.8 Changes in 2012](#)
 - [1.9 Series finale](#)
- [2 Reviews](#)
 - [2.1 Original ratings scale](#)
 - [2.2 2007 ratings primer](#)
 - [2.3 2011 ratings primer](#)
 - [2.4 Introduction of the half star](#)
- [3 Sketches and segments](#)
- [4 Recurring characters](#)
- [5 Interns](#)
- [6 Guest appearances](#)
- [7 Hatred](#)
- [8 Physical comedy](#)
- [9 Online content](#)
 - [9.1 The X-Play Boards](#)

X-Play	
 <p>X-Play Logo</p>	
Format	Video game Sketch comedy
Directed by	Alan Wu
Starring	Morgan Webb (2003–2013) Blair Herter (2008–2013) Jessica Chobot (2011–2013) Kristin Adams (2008–2013) Adam Sessler (1998–2012) Kate Botello (1999–2002) Lauren Fielder (1998–1999) Joel Gourdin (2007) Alex Sim-Wise (2011) Tiffany Smith (2012–2013)
Country of origin	USA
No. of episodes	1,378 (706 hours)
Production	
Executive	Wade Beckett

- [9.2 Chat](#)
- [9.3 Twitter](#)
- [9.4 X-Play: The Online Game](#)
- [9.5 Hyperactive](#)
- [9.6 Daily Video Podcast](#)
- [9.7 X-Play Weekly](#)
- [9.8 Feedback](#)
- [10 Book](#)
- [11 References](#)
- [12 External links](#)

History

GameSpot TV, *Extended Play*, and *X-Play* all originated in [San Francisco, California](#). Over the show's eight year history, it has gone through numerous changes, in more than just name.

GameSpot TV

In the days of *GameSpot TV*, the show was filmed on a simple ZDTV studio set consisting of faux-brick walls, randomly positioned TV monitors, and functioning [Gauntlet Legends](#) and [Rival Schools](#) arcade game cabinets. For the occasional special episode, filming would move off-site to another location, such as the [Sony Metreon](#) arcade, and numerous game conventions such as the Classic Gaming Expo and E3. Each episode would start off with *Game News*, where Sessler or Fielder would give a brief overview of top news stories featured on the GameSpot website. Game reviews were run in a segment known as *The Grill* (games were graded on GameSpot's official 0.1-10.0 system), *Spotlight* showcased special content such as interviews with industry leaders, and *Game Breakers* featured strategy guides and hints for recently released games. New episodes would debut on weekend mornings at 10:00 a.m. EST.

Extended Play

When *GameSpot TV* converted to *Extended Play* in February 2001^[4], the show moved entirely to the Metreon, and took on a very simple style and format. Filming consisted of co-hosts Sessler and Botello and a small single camera crew; the show featured strictly game reviews and game hints, and the 10-point grading system changed to a 5-point system. New episodes debuted once a week at 9:00 p.m. EST. Like *GameSpot TV*, certain special episodes would be filmed elsewhere. In [August 2002](#), the series became a daily program with a mix of repeats and first-run episodes airing Monday-Friday at 4:00 p.m. EST, with Friday episodes remaining in the 9:00 p.m. timeslot. After the departure of Botello, Sessler continued to host at the Metreon by himself, until the change to *X-Play* in April 2003.

X-Play San Francisco

When *X-Play* debuted on [April 28th](#) ^[5], the show moved back to the TechTV studios from the Metreon, and Morgan Webb came onboard as co-host, leaving her previous hosting duties on TechTV's [The Screen Savers](#) and [Call for Help](#). *X-Play* had a larger scale than that of *Extended Play*, but it still maintained an extremely simple and spartan style. Filming was done in TechTV's Studio B, home to the sets of *Call For Help* and [TechLive](#). The filming setup was increased to three cameras; a main floor camera, a [Jibcam](#) for high angle shots, and a black-and-white handheld [DV](#) camera, which would be cut to suddenly and intermittently throughout episodes.

X-Play's primary set consisted of a single couch, coffee table and television (with working game consoles) positioned in the middle of the large studio floor, but hosts Sessler and Webb would migrate around various areas of the studio, normally not even going to their actual set until the end of the program. Each episode would typically conclude with Sessler and Webb playing one of the consoles on the TV. The show's format consisted primarily of game reviews and previews (with some previews being conducted as live in-studio demos by Morgan and Adam), with an occasional game-related sketch thrown in for comedic value.

producer(s)	
Editor(s)	Justin Dornbush (lead) Sam Goldfien Matt Korb Brian C. Sullivan
Camera setup	multiple-camera setup
Running time	approximately 22 minutes (without commercials)
Production company(s)	G4 Media, LLC
Broadcast	
Original channel	ZDTV (1998-2001) TechTV (2001-2004) G4techTV (2004-2005) G4 (2004-2013)
Original run	July 4, 1998 ^[1] – January 23, 2013
External links	
Official website	
IMDb profile	
TV.com summary	

The *Disembodied Voice* was also introduced to the show at this phase in its history. This unseen [announcer](#) would begin each episode with an often over-the-top introduction to which the hosts usually responded or commented (these comments varied widely, ranging from total [non-sequiturs](#) to [Gilbert and Sullivan](#) references to [current events](#)).

Unlike its predecessors, *X-Play* had more of an edge, containing some adult language and more mature (sometimes controversial) subject matter. As a result, it was paired in a programming block with the network's other new show, [Unscrewed with Martin Sargent](#). *X-Play* originally ran new episodes five nights a week at 11:30 p.m. EST, but it was moved up to 11:00 EST soon after.

Many of the episodes created during this time period now air on the [G4 Rewind](#) block of "retro" programming.

***X-Play* Los Angeles**

[Comcast](#) purchased TechTV in May 2004 and merged it with its G4 network, necessitating a move for *X-Play*'s base of operations from San Francisco to G4's [Santa Monica](#) studios.

The new set designed for the show resembled a lounge - or "[rumpus room](#)" - where the hosts could sit around while discussing their latest reviews (during the 400th episode, which originally aired on [May 8th](#) of [2006](#), all chairs were removed from the set so that Adam and Morgan had to stand throughout the duration of each episode).

While originally maintaining its late-night time slot, new episodes were eventually moved to 4:00 p.m. EST in the afternoons (usually airing on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays) starting on [April 10](#), 2006. This changed to 3:00 p.m. EST on [September 5](#), 2006, before *X-Play* returned to prime-time on [November 6th](#) of the same year, to their current 8:00 p.m. EST timeslot.

On [March 4](#), [2007](#), it was announced that the G4 Studios in Santa Monica would close on [April 15th](#). Production of G4 programs was relocated to the Studios of the [E! Television Network](#) situated elsewhere in the Los Angeles area. As a consequence, there were new sets designed for *X-Play*, and many G4 employees involved in production were laid off.^[6]

The E! Building's set was smaller than the Santa Monica studio, thus some aspects of the studio had to be shrunk down. The *X-Play* logo was retro-fitted to sit above the stage on the right-hand side of the set, with curtains surrounding the entirety of the space to create a sense of intimacy; a large flat-screen monitor was also placed in the background, and several small decorative glass balls were strategically placed around various spots on the floor (Adam and Morgan would often joke of their fear that they would trip over one of these balls and hurt themselves). During video-game analysis and viewer mail segments, Sessler and Webb would sit in orange [recliner](#) chairs as they debated over the issue at hand.

***X-Play* Expands**

On [January 14](#), [2008](#), the G4 network commenced with a complete overhaul to the show's entire format, branding the move as *X-Play* "jumping to the next level"^[7].

Both Adam ^[8] and Morgan ^[9] have stated that this new format represents "the type of show that they've always wanted *X-Play* to be", whereby a strict focus on game reviews was replaced with a broader range of topics relating to the video-game field (including more in-depth gaming news, first looks at game demos, and game cheat-codes/strategies with [Kristin Holt](#) twice a week).

The set was once again refurbished to coincide with the change, as the studio now has blue-tinged walls covered with several flat-screen monitors, and a giant orange *X-Play* logo (also newly redesigned for the relaunch) covering the floor. In addition, G4 took advantage of the new set and show format by expanding *X-Play*'s schedule in order to air new episodes five days a week.

However, economic factors forced G4 to contract *X-Play*'s schedule back down to only three original episodes per week, starting on [March 2](#), [2009](#); in addition, the show's timeslot was moved out of prime-time to 6:30 p.m. EST (although reruns still air at 8 o'clock) and a number of *X-Play* staff members were laid off^[10].

***X-Play* XL**

In December 2008, the show aired *X-Large* one-hour episodes every Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday ^[11]. According to G4 television president Neil Tiles ^[12], this was an experimental change - with the possibility of having all episodes run 60 minutes long sometime in the future - where new segments were incorporated to see if *X-Play* can "go deeper than the current half hour show allows." Tiles also stated that the writers will be looking to add "more comedy" back into the program "as requested."

1,000th Episode

On [February 1, 2010](#) *X-Play* aired its 1,000th episode; to commemorate this television milestone, G4TV featured a [6-hour marathon](#) containing favorite episodes of the series, leading up to the premiere of the actual new episode. This was also supposed to be the first [HD](#) broadcast in the [history of the show](#), but high-definition episodes are instead scheduled to begin on [February 8](#).

Changes in 2012

In April 2012, it was announced that Sessler would no longer be part of the G4TV network [\[12\]](#). This happened to coincide with the latest re-design of the *X-Play* set, which made its debut on the June 18th (2012) episode and features giant white-tinged flatscreen monitors (displaying two large orange-and-black "X" logos) positioned behind the hosts, as well as the addition of a studio audience (making the presentation of the program similar to that of [Attack of the Show!](#)). Also, there is an area of the studio with two large reclining chairs and a glass table, used as a place to interview featured guests (such as Mark Lamia from [Treyarch](#) and [Ted Price](#) from [Insomniac Games](#)).

Series finale

X-Play aired its final episode with an hour-long tribute to the show's history on January 23, 2013. During the broadcast, the hosts announced that the network would be auctioning off *X-Play* memorabilia via [eBay](#) (the set was even designed to resemble a [telethon](#), with several people - Drunk Link, Canadian Guy, [Superman](#), a pair of [Imperial Stormtroopers](#) - manning phones), and that all proceeds from the winning bids would be donated to [Child's Play](#) at [childisplaycharity.org/xplay](#). The three items auctioned off were a seven-foot [Dovahkiin](#) statue, a signed copy of the script for the final episode, and a [Halo 4](#) Limited Edition Xbox 360 console bundle signed by the *X-Play* staff.

After a montage of scenes from the show's history to close out the broadcast (with the taline "A show on television, April 2003 - January 2013"), the remaining cast and crew thanked the viewers, as well as the developers for making the games that made the show possible ("even [Koei](#), because ... taking a dump on *Dynasty Warriors* filled up a lotta time"). The [closing credits](#) then ran in the style of a 1980s-era video game, with an 8-bit version of the logo and the phrase "CONGRATULATIONS!!! You have completed X-Play" written in 8-bit font and set to [chiptune](#) music. Once the credits were complete, the words "[GAME OVER](#)" appeared on screen along with a [Xbox Live](#) "Achievement Unlocked: 100G - Mission Complete" badge.

Reviews

There have been 2,705 games reviewed on *X-Play* during the ten years that it was on the air; for most of the show's run, reviews were designated by a five-point rating scale, based on such factors as graphics, sound, gameplay, and *playability* (i.e. replay value).

Original ratings scale

On *X-Play*'s original TechTV homepage [\[13\]](#), the ratings system was broken down in the following way:

“

- 1 - Hated it. Do not buy this game. Not even worth the bargain bin. Run from it. Escape!! Escape!!
- 2 - Alright. These games are fun, with some good points, but nothing special. There's definitely a few specific things holding this game back. Wait until the price comes down or pick it up as renter to check out some of the things it does right.
- 3 - Good. Fun to play, pretty solid titles, with a few minor flaws. Most games will probably fall into this category. They're the games that if you like the genre, or liked other similar titles, you might consider giving it a good look. Otherwise, you might not be into it.
- 4 - Very good. Games that are at the top of all our lists, but are missing that strange intangible aura of perfection, and unfortunately that's keeping them from getting in the realm of the almighty five.
- 5 - Near perfect/perfect. If you're a true player, these games will undoubtedly be in your collection, or at the very least you'll have played them until the cartridges and CDs melted. If a game gets a 5, and you like the genre, you should buy.

”

The first game to receive a perfect "5 out of 5" rating was [Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell](#) during the November 20th (2002) episode.

The first game to receive a "1 out of 5" rating was [Infogrames'](#) 2003 racer *Humvee Assault*, during the May 29th (2003) episode.

2007 ratings primer

In a 2007 episode billed as a "primer on our scoring system" ^[14], Adam and Morgan further elaborated on their ratings scale:

- A score of 1 is a game that "has to produce true crappiness, [through] the full cooperation of an entire development team - level designers taking off early to attend their children's soccer games, animators getting so high during their lunchbreak that they can't operate their mouse, and of course money hungry execs who will release anything if they can dupe kids into begging their moms for it."

Example Given: [50 Cent: Bulletproof](#)

- A score of 2 "is such a difficult score to give, because it requires a game that fundamentally fails, but has a barely redeeming charm which makes it untenable to give a 1; it's that [Suddenly Susan](#) cocktail of technical competence floated atop a pile of dreck."

Example Given: [Genji: Days of the Blade](#)

- There are different levels to a score of 3 - "there's the 3 that's a mix of very good and very bad elements (like [Blood Will Tell](#)) or 3's that have a great concept that's poorly executed (like [Railroads!](#)), and then there's those 3's that are just churned out because they know people will buy them even though there's nothing original in it (like every [FIFA](#) game ever)."

Example Given: [Sid Meier's Railroads!](#)

- "There are really two kinds of games that get 4's regularly: these are great games with significant problems (like [Dead Rising](#)) and games that are amazing but just aren't suited for everyone (the [Warhammer: Dark Crusade](#) expansion or any of the [Sims](#) expansions are good examples)."

Example Given: [Dead Rising](#)

- Titles that earn a perfect 5 out of 5 are "those magnificent games which, whatever minor flaws they may have, call out to us and say, 'Buy me, you must buy me' ... "

Example Given: [?kami](#)

During this episode, the hosts also explained why they use a 5-point ratings system, rather than a 10- or even 100-point scale:

“ **Morgan:** Our system is better because it recognizes that scores are broad generalizations.

Adam: For example, a [popular web site](#) gave [Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire](#) a score of 3.0 out of 10. They gave [Torino 2006](#) a 3.9. What is the difference?

Morgan: Both games suck, all the score is gonna be able to communicate to you is that the game is bad. If you want more nuance on the suckage, you have to actually go and read the review. See, in a 10-point scale, everything under 5 just means 'this game ain't worth buying', so there's no real difference.

Adam: And there's no real nuance to a score difference of two- or three-tenths of a point. Our scores at least give sweeping generalizations for you to use as a guide.

”

2011 ratings primer

On the January 24th (2011) episode, Adam and Morgan gave an [updated ratings primer](#) in response to confusion spawned by aggregator review sites like [Metacritic](#). To that end, the *X-Play* review scale was broken down in the following manner:

1 out of 5

- Broken controls
- Amateurish design
- Less fun than a menu screen
- Mainly comprised of shoddy licensed games ([Clash of the Titans](#)) and shovelware ([Tournament of Legends](#))

2 out of 5

- Some fun to be had
- Serious flaws in gameplay
- Rental at best
- Examples given were [Quantum Theory](#) and [Tron: Evolution](#)

3 out of 5

- Not bad, not great (average)
- Technically competent
- Often lacking in ambition
- Mainly comprised of rushed sequels ([Front Mission Evolved](#)) and functional licensed games ([James Bond 007: Blood Stone](#))

4 out of 5

- Good game with good ideas
- Accomplishes most goals
- Minor flaws hurt playability
- Games that might not be for everyone ([Heavy Rain](#))

5 out of 5

- Outstanding, genre-defining title
- Realizes all ambitions of its design
- Renews your faith in gaming
- Examples given were [Red Dead Redemption](#) and [Mass Effect 2](#)

Introduction of the half star

During the 2012 season premiere (January 17th), the "half star" was introduced to the *X-Play* ratings system, with [the hosts explaining](#) that they felt a change towards a "more granular ratings scale will help distinguish the great games from the really great games from the really really great games." They also believed that over the years it had gotten "a little too easy to score the coveted 5 out of 5," and that the change will make such an accomplishment "more of a rarity"; it also means that the lowest score a game can achieve is now a "[point-5](#) out of 5."

In addition, the review scale was again broken down to make the show's criteria clear to the viewing audience:

5 stars

- Exceptional game
- A true must-play
- Example Given: [Gears of War 3](#)

4 stars

- Great game with minor issues
- Lacks that "certain something"
- Example Given: [The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword](#)

3 stars

- Decent game
- Nothing special, nothing awful

- Example Given: [Dead Island](#)

2 stars

- Severely flawed
- Not recommended
- Example Given: [The Lord of the Rings: War in the North](#)

1 star

- Truly awful
- No redeeming qualities
- Example Given: [Thor: God of Thunder](#)

The hosts concluded this explanation with the following caveat:

“ **Adam:** I do wanna emphasize that while numerical scores are a convenient synopsis of the reviewer's opinion, they are incapable of encapsulating the nuances of the English language.

Morgan: That means read the text before you scream at us! We prefer informed screaming, or if you can't read, you can watch the video review ... ”

The first game to receive a half-star in its rating was [Kingdoms of Amalur: Reckoning](#) ([two and a half stars](#)) during the February 13th (2012) episode.

The first game to receive the lowest possible rating was [Steel Battalion: Heavy Armor](#) ([0.5 stars](#)) during the July 2nd (2012) episode.

During the April 8 (2013) edition of "[Sessler's ... Something](#)", Adam (now an employee of [Revision3](#)) implied that the introduction of the half-star rating was actually pushed through by G4 executives without his knowledge; he stated that he "came back in 2013 to find out that we had moved to a half-star system as well, [and] it was all at the behest of one very very large publisher who said that [the show] wouldn't be taken seriously unless we were listed on [Metacritic](#)."

Sketches and segments

Various recurring segments and comedy skits have been used throughout the show's history by the *X-Play* writers.

Main article: [X-Play's sketches and segments](#)

Recurring characters

X-Play has amassed a large group of fictional characters that will appear from time to time, often to bring some humor during game reviews.

Main article: [List of X-Play characters](#)

Interns

X-Play has its own cast of [interns](#) (students from local universities who have signed up with G4 to gain valuable work experience in the television production field), who will sometimes appear as characters on the show. When appearing on camera, they are commonly outfitted in a white undershirt with the word *INTERN* scrawled across the chest in black [Sharpie](#).

Their roles are not relegated to simply being on-screen comic relief, as the interns are accountable for much of the game footage used during reviews/previews. *X-Play* interns also play a role in other behind-the-scenes work on the show's set; some of the former interns have eventually been hired full-time within the G4 company itself. Examples include Leticia Caparaz (the first intern to be offered a full-time position in 1999 as a Production Assistant and later the program's Web Producer, before leaving the company in June 2004 as a result of the G4/TechTV merger), Jason Frankovitz, Albert Iskander (who has worked as a Production Assistant for G4's *Video Game Vixens* and [G4tv.com](#)), Gene Yraola (now a part of G4's Games Editorial Department, the liaison between the shows and the actual software/hardware companies), Eric Acasio (a production assistant for *X-Play*) and Emily Mollenkopf (hired as a production assistant on *Attack of the Show* in 2006).

A near-complete list of interns who have worked on the show follows:

- From [San Francisco, California](#): Jason Frankovitz, Scott Humphrey, Chris Ivarson, Matt Ketterer, Desiree Peel, Jana Suverkropp, Kevin Theobald, Blake Yoshiura, and Kevin Yuen.
- From [Los Angeles, California](#): , Eric Acasio, Russ Brock, Brian Flores, Albert Iskander, Issac, Kenny, Megan, Emily Mollenkopf, Geoff Pinkus, Stephan, Alex Villegas, Chuck Wilkerson, Chris Wilson, and Gene Yraola.

The *Screaming Intern* (played by Robert Manuel), was actually not a true intern, but instead was an editorial coordinator for the show ^[15].

Guest appearances

When *X-Play* was still a part of TechTV, personalities from other shows on the network would often make guest appearances (including [Leo Laporte](#), [Yoshi DeHerrera](#), and *Unscrewed*'s [Martin Sargent](#) and [Laura Swisher](#)). This continued after the merger with G4, with names like [Kevin Pereira](#), [Tina Wood](#), and Julie Stoffer.

X-Play has also had [pseudo-celebrities](#) that are not affiliated with G4 (such as [Tony Little](#), [Kato Kaelin](#), [Michael Winslow](#), and [Rip Taylor](#)) appear on the show.

"Hatred"

There have been several gaming titles/genres/trends over the years which the hosts have displayed an exaggerated sense of "hatred" towards (often playing up their dislike for the cameras in order to make for humorous television)^[16]. These include:

- [Card battle games](#) such as [Yu-Gi-Oh!](#)
- Games based on [anime series](#) (particularly [Naruto](#), [Dragon Ball Z](#), [One Piece](#) and [Fullmetal Alchemist](#))
- "Ungodly boob physics", where female video-game characters are rendered with impossibly large [breasts](#) that bounce and sway unnaturally and independently from the rest of their bodies (this phenomenon is particularly prevalent in [Japanese dating simulation games](#) like *Sexy Beach 2*)
- Game series which continue to produce titles despite a lack of quality and/or innovation (such as [Dynasty Warriors](#), [Mega Man](#), [Sonic the Hedgehog](#), [Leisure Suit Larry](#), and [Tony Hawk](#))
- The proliferation of [WWII first-person shooter](#) games on the market (during their review of [Moscow to Berlin: Red Siege](#), Morgan remarked "That's it! No more World War II games! According to my contract, I only have to review 75 World War II games per year, and I already hit my quota in March!")
- Video games based on existing [IPs](#) (like current movies or TV shows), since they are usually rushed to the market to cash in on the latest craze and end up being painful to actually play (such as the [Charlie's Angels](#) or [Da Vinci Code](#) video games)
- 3D water levels in games, since the show's writers feel that game developers almost never capture the feeling of [swimming](#) in an enjoyable manner ("Instead of making us awkwardly pilot our character through zero-gravity space, why don't you just come to our house and punch us in the face? It's exactly the same amount of fun!")
- *Escort missions*, where the player is forced to keep an [NPC](#) character (who has its own health meter) from dying; this often proves difficult when the NPC's [A.I.](#) is so insufficient that they continuously place themselves in harm's way (leaving the player with little or no chance to save them)
- [Barbie Horse Adventures: Wild Horse Rescue](#) (Morgan has often called this the worst game ever made)
- [Jonny Moseley](#) and the ridiculous comments made in his video game *Jonny Moseley Mad Trix* (including the classic line "What if it snowed in San Francisco?")
- [Dane Cook](#) and his brand of "comedy"
- [Uwe Boll](#) and his film adaptations of video games
- [Shovelware](#) for the Nintendo [Wii](#), like [All Star Cheer Squad](#) and ["Crappy Minigame Collection No. 272"](#)
- Developers who feel the need to take a perfectly acceptable single-player game and tack on a [multiplayer mode](#)
- [Sixaxis controls in PS3 games](#)
- 3D [Castlevania](#) games
- [Level grinding](#) in [role-playing games](#)

Physical comedy

For comedic purposes, the *X-Play* writers have portrayed the show as an exceedingly violent working environment; interns are often depicted as suffering from [sexual harassment](#) and [physical abuse](#) at the hands of the hosts (such as being forced to use a bucket to relieve themselves - instead of the bathroom - or retrieving items suspended over the "*X-Play* snake pit").

This violent dynamic has also manifested itself within the interactions between the hosts themselves (like when Morgan Webb continuously struck Adam Sessler with a baseball bat during *X-Play*'s [mockumentary](#) on the history of violence in video games).

Online content

The producers of *X-Play* have used a number of internet-driven initiatives to engage the show's technologically-saavy audience.

The X-Play Boards

The show's hosts have often been the subject of numerous negative comments (including "Morgan's not really a gamer!" and "Sessler doesn't know gaming because he hates *Final Fantasy*!") through the show's official [message board](#). The vitriol spewed forth on the forums has become so well-documented that the *X-Play* staff even produced a "music video" dedicated to the message board's denizens entitled *On the X-Play Boards* ([MP3 format](#)).

The song was written and performed by *Marque Phahee and the Bling Dongs* (in reality *X-Play* segment producer Mark Fahey playing an acoustic guitar), featuring the *X-Play After School Choir* (comprised of Morgan, Adam and various recurring *X-Play* characters). It is also supposed to be the lead track from the *X-Play: The Musical* motion picture soundtrack (even though *X-Play* eventually created an actual all-musical episode which made no mention of *On the X-Play Boards*).

Chat

When *X-Play* was still a part of TechTV, the show would host an [online chat](#) every Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. EST. After the merger with G4, *X-Play*'s official [IRC](#) chat room was re-designed by Philippe Detournay and Raphael Seeqmuller using the [PJIRC](#) chat client.

On [November 6, 2006](#) (to coincide with the show's move to prime time^[17]), the G4 network integrated *X-Play*'s chat feature into the actual broadcast of each new episode. Using an idea similar to their production of [Star Trek 2.0](#), a window covering the bottom half of the screen would pop up during reviews and display messages typed out by G4 users on *X-Play*'s [official web site](#) in "real-time" (with moderation for broadcast [standards](#) to avert profanity and other inappropriate responses). The presentation of the *X-Play* chat function was later redesigned for the show's 2008 reformatting, so that chat messages would display on the left-hand side of the screen during a review.

Twitter

The interactive chat feature was abandoned in late 2009, in order to take advantage of the increasing popularity of the micro-blogging site [Twitter](#). The show's producers now present *X-Play* viewers with a question relevant to the day's news/reviews via their [official Twitter feed](#), then display the resulting answers during that night's episode through a scrolling ticker on the bottom portion of the screen.

Starting the week of June 13th (2011), the show began the practice of having their on-air personalities live-tweeting during reruns of the show airing on Thursdays and Fridays.

X-Play: The Online Game

X-Play: The Online Game is a short [Flash](#) game created by the [San Francisco](#)-based company *Orange Design* (graphics and audio by Sean Talley, programming by Fearghal O'Dea).

The brief intro sequence begins in the fictitious *X-Play Labs* (which made an appearance on the show during the *X-Play X-Plentions* skit), where Morgan is about to put the finishing touches on the *X-Play* online game. An excited Adam asks if the game can have "[fudge zombies](#) and stealthy [ninjas](#) and drunken [pirates](#) and [radioactive Dik-diks](#)", then haphazardly presses a large red button which "digitizes physical matter and materializes digital matter"; this causes all of the bad guys from the *X-Play* video game to escape (much to Morgan's chagrin).

Once the game begins, players can choose from big-headed versions of either Adam (whose main weapon is *Slippy the Fish*) or Morgan (whose main weapon is her fists), and battle their way through a few continuously repeating levels of action. Controls comprise of the [arrow keys](#) for movement, the "A" key to punch, and the "S" key to kick.

The game is no longer available on [G4's website](#), but a mirror site can be found via Orange Design's [online company portfolio](#).

Hyperactive

Culled from the theory that many viewers of TechTV both watched the network while using the internet, [TechTV's Hyperactive](#) was launched in 2004.

Designed to be used as a combination trivia game and chat room which would run concurrently with the 11 PM weeknight block of *X-Play* and *Unscrewed with Martin Sargent*, participants could compete against one another by answering questions relating to, and revolving around, video games, pop-culture and host references from episodes that were currently airing. Leaderboards were synchronized with the episodes as they aired, often showcasing the names of the 10 highest scoring contestants as the show came back from each commercial break.

After the merger of TechTV and G4TV, *Hyperactive* was abandoned.

Daily Video Podcast

On [November 11, 2005](#), G4 started offering *X-Play* segments (reviews, skits, etc.) for free in [podcast](#) form via their [website](#) and the [iTunes](#) store, giving viewers the opportunity to watch segments on-demand with their computers and portable devices. These podcasts have since become available through other [podcatcher](#) software (such as the [Zune Marketplace](#)) as well.

X-Play Weekly

On [August 14, 2008](#), a special weekly wrap-up show called *X-Play Weekly* was made available for download on the [Xbox LIVE Video Store](#),^[18] allowing [Xbox 360](#) owners to view highlights from the [previous week's episodes](#) for 160 [Microsoft Points](#) (\$2 US).

Beginning the week of [June 15, 2009](#), *X-Play Weekly* was also made available for download through the [Playstation Network](#), also at \$2 per weekly program.

Feedback

In [September 2009](#), G4TV.com rebranded its *Feed Nightcap* vodcast (a web spinoff of the *Attack of the Show* segment "The Feed") with the new title [Feedback](#). This weekly segment was hosted by Adam Sessler (before Blair Herter took over official hosting duties with the [October 19th 2011 episode](#)) and features a rotating panel of co-hosts drawn from *X-Play*'s editorial staff with the occasional guest from the gaming industry (such as [Tim Schafer](#) and [Cliff Bleszinski](#)). The show's stated goal is to deliver "intelligent, informative, and very very humorous discussion about games" by reviewing current news stories as well as answering viewer questions, and is filmed via a roundtable format in G4's audio recording studio. Even though the show could be considered an extension of the AOTS brand, all of the content for the program is drawn from and presented by *X-Play* staff.

Book

On [October 22, 2004](#), TechTV (in association with Peachpit Press) published the book *The X-Play Insider's Guide to Gaming: All You Ever Wanted to Know About Video Games From G4techTV's Brutally Honest Experts*. Written by Marc Saltzman (along with the *X-Play* Cast) and weighing in at a hefty 468 pages, the book contains game reviews, cheat codes, and Q&A sessions with the cast and crew. Adam and Morgan even went on a nation-wide book-signing tour to help promote their literary endeavor.

Copies of the book can be found everywhere from the [Brooklyn Public Library](#) to the [University of Hong Kong](#) ^[19].

References

- ¹ [Letter From the Editor: 11 Years & Counting - G4tv.com](#)
- ² [YouTube - ZDTV Promo](#)
- ³ <http://web.archive.org/web/20010301043758/http://www.techtv.com/extendedplay/story/0,23008,3311437,00.html>
- ⁴ [G4tv.com - Video - Best of X-Play: X-Play's First Episode](#) "Video Description: From the ashes of Extended Play, X-Play rose up like a badly-filmed phoenix. This inaugural episode features Morgan's first appearance as regular co-host... and lots of awkward, black-and-white close-ups. Originally Aired: April 28, 2003."
- ⁵ [G4 Rewind: Confirmed: G4 studios to close; Operations moving to E!; Layoffs ensue](#)
- ⁶ [X-Play Expands](#)
- ⁷ [Sessler's Soapbox](#)
- ⁸ [Internet Superstar](#)
- ⁹ [Cuts Hit X-Play](#)
- ¹⁰ [X-Play extends to one hour in December - Joystiq](#)
- ¹¹ [G4 - Open Source](#)
- ¹² <http://kotaku.com/5905119/adam-seessler-out-at-g4>
- ¹³ [Internet Archive Wayback Machine](#)
- ¹⁴ [The Out-of-Five Episode](#)

15. [^ G4 - XPlay - Hosts](#)
16. [^ X-Play Videos: Things We'd Love to Kill](#)
17. [^ G4 - The Feed - Pimp My 'X-Play!' New Features!](#)
18. [^ Broadcasting & Cable](#)
19. [^ X-Play Insider's Guide to Gaming: All you ever wanted to know about video games from G4TECHTV's brutally honest experts \[WorldCat.org\]](#)

External links

- [X-Play official site](#)
- [X-Play microsite to celebrate show re-launch](#)
- [X-Play Reviewed Games Database](#)
- [*The X-Play Insider's Guide to Gaming*](#)